

Jong Un remains singularly focused on making provocations and establishing a “military first” doctrine.

Along with Guam and Alaska, Hawaii has been placed in the crosshairs of this intensifying threat. It’s crucial for the United States, and Hawaii in particular, to take these threats from North Korea seriously. We cannot be complacent. We cannot afford a mistake that puts the lives of our families at risk.

Intelligence and previous missile launches have shown that Hawaii, Guam, and Alaska are within range of North Korea’s intercontinental ballistic missile capabilities. New intelligence suggests that North Korea may be planning multiple missile launches in the coming days beyond the two Musudan mobile missiles it has fueled, raised, and positioned along its east coast.

Our Nation’s focus and commitment to the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region now faces a serious test. As we rebalance and realign our presence in the region, it’s vitally important that we get it right in terms of the strategy, as well as resourcing.

The United States has an important interest in maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula, as well as in the Asia-Pacific region. We must stand together with our allies in the region ready to respond to any contingency, and we must take a forward-leaning approach to address this imminent threat to prevent further provocations and to protect our families and our national assets.

The international community has clearly stated its opposition to his actions and threats, but we need to ask more of those influential nations that have remained quiet. China, in particular, should be playing a strong role as a deterrent of North Korea’s military ambitions.

We’re also seeing a destabilizing effect outside of the region as a result of the dangerous partnership between the two isolated rogue states of Iran and North Korea as regimes working together to develop more powerful weapons, missile delivery systems, and nuclear capabilities.

It would be safe to assume that by addressing the threat on our country by North Korea, we are also affecting Iran and their nuclear ambitions.

I commend our military commanders for their firm and confident resolve that they’ve shown in response to the endless posturing and provocative behavior of North Korea; however, from a U.S. policy standpoint, it’s time to make a serious change. Such a change must be comprehensive, carving a new path forward using diplomatic and military means in order to break the cycle of threats that has existed for far too long.

The carrot-and-stick approach that we’ve taken in the past has not effectively deterred North Korea’s nuclear ambitions. To the contrary, we continue to face escalated threats which now extend beyond the region.

Considering the serious threats we face today and the fact that the threat of missile attack on the U.S. is likely to grow, I’m deeply concerned about the President’s proposed cuts to the missile defense budget in fiscal year 2014. This is a portion of the budget that should be increased, not decreased, to ensure the safety and security of our people.

In the coming days and months, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in pushing for action and resources to ensure that Hawaii and our country is protected and any potential attack is prevented.

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#### NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SEQUESTRATION ON LOCAL EMPLOYERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. During the past 2 weeks, I met with local employers and constituents who expressed continued frustration with the negative effects of sequestration in our community. Republicans and Democrats alike spent most of the past year warning of the dire consequences these cuts would have on our economy, and yet the recently adopted continuing resolution for the rest of the fiscal year bakes in those very harmful cuts. I share my constituents’ frustrations, which is why I voted against the self-inflicted wound on our economy.

Every community in America will feel the ripple effects of sequestration, but my northern Virginia district will be disproportionately impacted because of the high concentration of military facilities, Federal employees and businesses that partner with the Federal Government. We do cybersecurity, custodial services, and everything in between. I met with a number of these employers. They expressed real concern that the lingering uncertainty over sequestration threatens job security and the ability to remain competitive economically.

I fear the consequences of sequestration and what that will mean to small businesses that don’t have the same resources as their larger counterparts to weather these steep cuts. I visited one company with 200 employees who are developing a laser-based flight guidance system for NASA through a Small Business Innovation Research grant. Just recently, it announced that their technology is being deployed through a contract with the Defense Department to assist with remote detection of explosives to better protect our troops in the field. They’re worried about cutbacks.

The Small Business Administration’s fiscal ’13 budget will be reduced by more than \$92 million as a result of sequestration, and more than one-fourth of those cuts will come from the Small Business Loan Program, directly affecting small businesses, veteran-

owned businesses, and female- and minority-owned businesses in their ability to hire. As my colleagues know, the Federal Government has a small business contracting goal of 23 percent. We have fallen short of that goal in the last 6 years, and sequestration will actually make it harder to ever achieve that goal.

I also met with my local chamber of commerce to discuss its desire to expand the regional Metro system here in the Nation’s Capital to accommodate future growth and development throughout the region. The most recent census data says our community has the highest concentration of megacommuters in the country. There is no question we need to invest more in our regional transportation network. This particular proposal enjoys bipartisan support, but yet, under sequestration, it’s headed nowhere because the New Starts program, under the Federal Transit Administration, will be cut by as much as \$100 million because of sequestration.

Whether it’s cuts in small business assistance or in transportation, sequestration is reducing our investments in the very things that create jobs and provide for our competitive advantage in the future. Local realtors I met with expressed concern about the uncertainty of sequestration putting the brakes on sales just as regional and national housing markets are finally showing signs of a robust recovery. The slow-down in Federal spending is already creating a drag on local economies. A 22 percent drop in defense spending shaved nearly 3 points off economic growth in the last quarter, and the CBO projects it could be half of the growth otherwise projected in all of 2013 because of sequestration.

Madam Speaker, I don’t argue that cuts are needed, but sequestration uses a mindless, meat-ax approach in which nothing is spared and nothing is differentiated. I’ve long called for Members of the House to work together in a bipartisan fashion and in a balanced way—balanced between revenue growth and discrete spending cuts—to move forward and reduce the debt. This week’s delivery of the President’s budget is a heartening sign because he does just that. I hope we will heed his budget. I hope we will try to work with the President to achieve a balanced approach that replaces this mindless sequestration.

#### THE HOUSING FAIRNESS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank the many persons who have labored long and hard to help fulfill Dr. Martin Luther King’s dream. He devoted his life to transforming neighborhoods into brotherhoods, and I’d like to speak to you today about this concept because, to do this—to transform neighborhoods into brotherhoods—we must become